



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES FORCES - IRAQ  
BAGHDAD, IRAQ  
APO AE 09342-1400

APR 07 2010

USFI-DCG-O

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Non-Battle Injuries

1. Although we have drastically reduced the number of accidental deaths over the last few years, the number of non-battle injuries continues to rise. Since 1 October 2009, USF-I experienced over 200 reported non-fatal injuries. In recent accidents, investigators noted an increase of Service Members failing to follow standards defined in unit SOPs, operator manuals, or other prescribed procedures. Identified acts of noncompliance include supervisors allowing untrained/uncertified personnel to operate certain vehicles and equipment.

2. The first few months of a deployment can be hectic as units get acclimated to their area of responsibility. Too often, we excuse mishaps by citing the difficult operating environments, but there is no excuse for many of our accidents if you plan properly, pay attention to detail through effective risk mitigation, and involve the chain of command. These accidents result in personnel missing days away from work or placed on restricted duty and impedes our ability to accomplish the mission. World-class organizations, such as ours, do not tolerate preventable accidents.

3. The overwhelming majority of recent accidents resulted from a lack of discipline and failure to enforce standards. Personnel must be trained, proficient and disciplined in their execution. Leaders must care enough to be ruthless in their enforcement of the standard and hold the responsible individuals accountable. Specific focus areas include:

a. Personnel Injury – Out of 301 recordable accidents this Fiscal Year, personnel injuries have accounted for over 71%. Examples include sports injuries, burns, accidental stabbings, personnel pinned between equipment, slips, trips, and falls resulting in fractures and partial amputations. Many recent injuries occurred when individuals placed hands or feet within a pinch zone resulting in the loss of a leg, arm, hand, finger, or toe. Again, the root cause of these accidents has been a failure to follow known and established standards or the failure of our leaders to employ basic principles of risk management.

b. Negligent Discharge – Weapons handling is one of the most basic military tasks. Lack of muzzle awareness and assumption that a weapon is not loaded are the main causes of negligent discharge injuries and fatalities. Train your personnel to constantly

USFI-DCG-O  
SUBJECT: Non-Battle Injuries

be aware of where they are pointing their weapon. You must continuously remind your personnel to treat every weapon as if it were locked and loaded.

c. Vehicle Safety – Speeding and inattentiveness are the two primary causes of vehicle accidents, injuries, and fatalities. I expect everyone to follow directives and policies with respect to safe vehicle operations at all times. Slow down and buckle up. To reiterate, the use of seatbelts and vehicle restraint systems is not optional – it is mandatory and saves lives.

4. We must reverse our current trends relating to non-battle injuries. These accidents are costly to our mission accomplishment. Let's get back to the basics. Remember, safety is inherent in the disciplined execution of your mission. Proper risk management and adjusting operations are essential to mitigate unacceptable risks. I want commanders and leaders engaged and expect their personal and aggressive attention in protecting our force.



ROBERT W. CONE  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Deputy Commanding General  
Operations

DISTRIBUTION: A